

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-08

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DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE FAS/HUME, NOVOTNY AND MINYARD

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR/UR

SUBJ: DISCUSSIONS WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE ON USSR

AGRICULTURAL TRADE PROSPECTS AND PROMOTION

1. AGATTACHE DISCUSSED CURRENT USSR GRAIN PURCHASES AND ESTIMATE WITH P.I. SAKUN, CHIEF, MAIN ADMINISTRATION FOR IMPORTS OF RAW MATERIALS AND FOODSTUFFS, AUGUST 20. OTHER TOPICS INCLUDED US REQUEST FOR FORWARD ESTIMATES, FUTURE INTENT TO PURCHASE GRAINS, CURRENT US SUPPLY DEMAND ESTIMATES, LONG-TERM GRAIN AGREEMENT WITH JAPAN AND TRADE PROMOTION ACTIVITIES.

2. SAKUN FULLY AWARE OF POLITICAL, PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION ATTITUDES TOWARD USSR GRAIN PURCHASES, BUT EXHIBITED NO SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT EFFECTS OF SUCH ATTITUDES ON CURRENT RELATIONS WITH US.

3. WHILE UNDERSTANDING US NEED FOR CONFIRMATION ON FUTURE PURCHASES AND ESTIMATES, SAKUN STATED THAT HE COULD PROVIDE REQUESTED DATA, BUT ADDED, "WHAT WILL US DO WITH GRAIN IF IT DOES NOT SELL IT?"

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4. ON LONG-TERM AGREEMENTS, SAKUN INDICATED THAT SUCH PROPOSALS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN MADE BY US OFFICIALS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIET COUNTERPARTS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE.

"THERE IS SOME MERIT IN THIS PROPOSAL, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF NORMALIZING TRADE PATTERNS AND PRICES, BUT OUR POSITION IS NOT THE SAME AS JAPAN'S. WE ARE A MAJOR PRODUCER OF GRAIN, AS WELL AS A LARGE CONSUMER."

5. ATTACHE ALSO DISCUSSED TRADE PROSPECTS OF SUGAR AND INDICATED POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE SOVIET PURCHASES. SAKUN RESPONDED THAT NEARLY ALL SUGAR IS PURCHASED FROM CUBA, AND THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF IMMEDIATE PENDING PURCHASE IN OTHER MARKETS. HOWEVER, SAKUN DID STATE CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR IN SOVIET UNION IS INCREASING FASTER, BECAUSE OF HIGH USE IN BEVERAGES AND CANDIES.

6. ON TRADE PROMOTION ACTIVITIES, SAKUN WAS MOST RESPONSIVE TO ATTACHE'S SUGGESTION OF HOTEL SHOWS, AND INDICATED THAT HE WOULD ARRANGE FOR ATTACHE APPOINTMENT WITH KEY OFFICIALS IN INTOURIST.

7. COMMENT: THE RESTRAINT OF SOVIET OFFICIALS IN DISCUSSING TRADE AND PARTICULARLY INTENDED GRAIN PURCHASES IS "OLD HAT." ATTACHE'S APPROACH IS TO KEEP REMINDING RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS OF US INTEREST AND SOVIET COMMITMENTS. THE CONTINUED POSITIVE POSITION ON LONG-TERM AGREEMENTS NOTED BY SAKUN WARRANTS FURTHER SOUNDINGS AT HIGHER LEVELS. ATTACHE MOST PLEASED AT FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO SUGGESTION OF HOTEL SHOWS FOR US PRODUCTS.

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